

Get Your *Grub* On in Los Angeles

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Restaurants in LA: Bacon lovers rejoice! I had heard about Grub restaurant's so-called "crack" bacon, which purportedly keeps patrons jonesin' for more until their next fix. So I stopped into the West Hollywood eatery to give it a try. I'm now a bona fide addict of this Sweet and Sassy slice of Heaven.

While the sweet, savory and spicy bacon clearly keeps customers on a short leash, the rest of the grub menu is equally characteristic. Grub co-owners Betty Fraser of Bravo TV's Top Chef fame and her partner Denise DeCarlo have skillfully established a charming ambiance that feels like you're at someone's residence eating a lovingly (though expertly) home cooked meal. This relaxed and familiar sense of "home" is readily apparent in the whimsical suburban décor throughout the converted 1920s duplex, which is located in the heart of Hollywood's hip Post-Production District. Even in the restroom, personal effects and photos of the owners, their friends and their pets further the restaurant's sentimental sensibility.



With my recent visit for breakfast, it was crystal clear why Grub has received numerous awards and distinctions, including the 2003, 2004 and 2005 "Best Lunch Spot," 2005 award for "Best Brunch Spot" and 2009 "Best American Food and Best Breakfast in Los Angeles" as voted on by LA Citysearch. Grub also received nods for the "Best Tuna Melt" in Los Angeles by Los Angeles Magazine and a Top Ten Award for the Best Ice Cream Sandwich by 944 Magazine. In addition, in the 2007 Los Angeles Zagat Survey, Grub was chosen as one of the "Top Five Breakfast Spots" in Los Angeles. I could not agree more.

On the morning of my visit, we opted to sit in the restaurant's outdoor patio area. Exemplifying the wit and unpretentiousness of the chef-owners appreciably juxtaposed with their seriously inspired cuisine, my table was presented with a complimentary "feel like a kid again" bowl of dry cereal-

Cap'n Crunch, Cocoa Puffs and the like — to nosh on while we perused the copious menu. How fun!

Menu mission number one: Sweet & Sassy Bacon. Beyond that, I opted for an omelet — Grub style — with mushrooms, spinach, brie, roasted onions and white truffle oil. Insanely delicious, with hearty and decidedly fresh, top-quality ingredients. My companion ordered the BLT which included that enchanting bacon, of course, stacked with crisp romaine, hearty tomatoes and a garlic aioli on a cheddar Kaiser roll. Both generously portioned dishes were served with Herb Roasted New Potatoes that were nearly as addictive as the bacon. Seriously.



Another notable on the breakfast menu is the "Friggin' Amazing" French Toast — croissants in a cinnamon vanilla batter with raspberry butter, toasted pecans and syrup. Beyond breakfast, Grub does offer a divine brunch, lunch, dinner and dessert menu. Standouts include the Mac and Cheese with its Cayenne kick served with fresh mixed Greens tossed in a homemade Champagne Lemon Vinaigrette; the Tuna Melt (voted best in L.A.!) served with melted sharp cheddar, homemade red pepper watercress fennel cashew pesto on crisp, tangy sourdough bread and served with black pepper potato chips; Rosemary Grilled Steak Salad with flavorful, grilled rosemary tri-tip over fresh mixed greens with crumbled blue cheese, roasted onions & a rich dijon dressing; and the California Crab Cake with flaky real crab mixed with fresh tarragon, dill, & lemon, coated in panko, pan fried to golden, and topped with spicy sriracha aioli.

For dessert lovers, I highly recommend Grub's famous "Big Ass Ice Cream Sandwich," which consists of neapolitan ice cream sandwiched between two huge — and I do mean huge-chocolate chip cookies. This is topped with whipped cream, chocolate sauce, caramel sauce and sprinkles. It's a veritable party on your palate! Another dessert of note at Grub is Libby's Famous Fosse Cookies-chocolate chip cookie dough rolled in potato chips then baked. Sweet, salty — it works.

In all, I was not only impressed with Grub's relaxed home-style café atmosphere, but also the owners' palpable sense of humor and their seemingly effortless ability to elevate common, staple dishes in American culture to something truly spectacular. Grub is indeed California comfort food at its best. Visit Grub online at www.grub-la.com.

Merilee Kern is JustLuxe.com's "The Luxe List" Executive Review Editor. She scours the luxury marketplace for new and captivating product, service and travel "musts."